

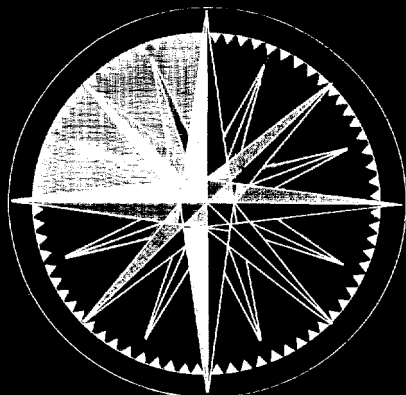
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SPECIAL REPORT

CUBA'S RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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CUBA'S RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

Cuba's interest in Africa is based on the Castro regime's dual desire to expand its influence outside the Communist camp and to head the "socialist revolution" in the less-developed world. Events in Latin America have accentuated these goals: the rupture of diplomatic relations with all but one Latin American state--Mexico--has almost completed Cuba's isolation from its natural sphere of activities, and recent reverses in its subversive efforts in this hemisphere have forced the regime to seek more politically fertile soil. Cuba has already cultivated a special relationship with Algeria, and is concentrating on extending massive propaganda support to other radical African regimes and to the various "liberation" movements. It has also provided academic and guerrilla warfare training to selected groups of Africans. There has, however, been no confirmation of direct shipments of arms to any country but Algeria.

Efforts to Influence Africa

Cuban propaganda emphasizes the theme that the Castro regime is a model for all "progressive" Africans to copy in shaping their policies and governments. Cuba is pictured as a small agrarian country--dominated by an aggressive neighbor--which has succeeded in winning economic and political independence through widespread popular support of an inspiring world figure. Cuba is also portrayed as moving steadily down the road to socialism and total "emancipation." To impress Africans, Havana constantly stresses the Negro background of many Cubans.

Havana's overtures contain a distinct undertone of compe-

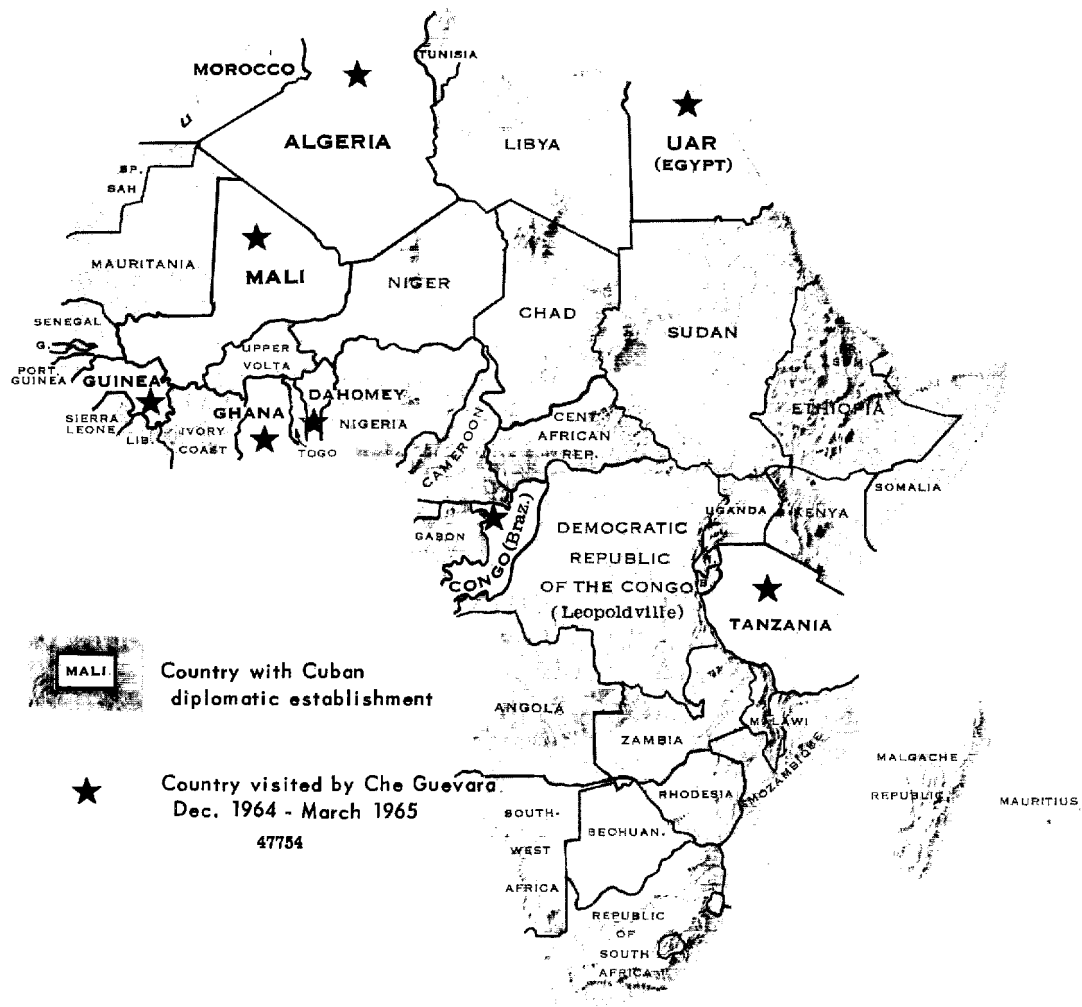
tition with Moscow and Peiping for influence in Africa. The stress on Cuban-African affinities is one manifestation of this. Another is the implied theme that Cuba has been able to maintain balance between the two Communist giants and has thus been able to reap all the benefits of its "socialist revolution" without becoming a satellite.

In November 1962, Cuba established a national center of African studies which presents displays on "downtrodden Africans," and emphasizes the benefits that Cuba's Negro citizens have received since the revolution. It also helps in the promotion campaigns for special events such as African Freedom Day and the weeks of

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solidarity with African liberation movements.

Every week, Havana radio broadcasts 26 hours of Arabic, French, and Spanish commentaries which are heard in North Africa. These are among the most virulently anti-US broadcasts emanating from Cuba. The Cuban news agency, Prensa Latina, also maintains an office in Algiers which disseminates a steady stream of African-oriented propaganda.

Cuba's most dramatic move to make its presence felt in Africa was to send its most fiery advocate of "national revolutionary movements," Industries Minister Che Guevara, on a three-month tour of several radical African states early this year. Guevara's itinerary included Algeria, the UAR, Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Dahomey, the Brazzaville Congo, and Tanzania. Throughout his travels Guevara stressed the similarities between Africa and Cuba, and hit hard on the idea that Cuba's experience was a successful epic in the anti-colonialist movement. Guevara went on to tell the Africans that their biggest problem--as it had been for Cuba--was US imperialism, and warned that liberation requires long struggles which are not concluded by the achievement of "theoretical" independence. In public communiqués and private exhortations, his praise for the independence struggles in Angola, Mozambique, "so-called Portuguese Guinea," and Rhodesia, was juxtaposed with bitter

invective against the government of South Africa.

Guevara laced his remarks with barbs aimed at the USSR.

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Guevara advised the Africans not to get too closely entangled with the Soviets--economically or politically. In a newspaper interview, he is quoted as saying that Cuba's current economic problems are partly the result of Soviet intervention and bad advice. Guevara praised Cuba's trade pacts with the USSR, but he also made some thinly veiled criticisms of Moscow's practices. He made the point, for example, that socialist countries are no better than the imperialists if they force underdeveloped countries to exchange raw goods for manufactured commodities at world prices set by the capitalists. He stated that socialist nations have the moral duty to provide free arms and generous economic aid to the emerging nations of Africa.

Relations With Algeria

Over the past two or three years, an increasingly strong bond of friendship has developed between Cuba and Algeria. As Algerian President Ben Bella put it, "I want it known once and for all that (Algeria and Cuba) are more united than any two countries in the world ever were before." This relationship did, indeed, spring from a common revolutionary background, but it is also nourished by a sense of sharing common problems and pursuing similar aspirations.

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Cuba, acutely conscious of its growing international isolation, initiated the ties with Algeria and seems prepared to go to almost any length to preserve them. In October 1963, for example, Cuba sent men and arms to assist the Algerians in a border dispute with Morocco, even though this led to a temporary break in diplomatic relations with its chief trading partner in Africa. In addition, there has been an unending flow of Cuban dignitaries to Algiers.

Cuban support for Algeria continues. There are presently Cuban medical personnel in Algeria, a legacy of a program initiated in 1962 to care for Algerian casualties in the war with France. Although Cuba can ill afford to spare such professional people, the Castro regime has found the program so rewarding in terms of propaganda value that it has pulled together another contingent that will soon be relieving the one now on duty in Algeria. 25X1

Algeria has reciprocated, albeit primarily in the propaganda field. Ben Bella spent two days in Cuba just prior to the October 1962 missile crisis, and while there, endorsed Castro's demand that the US give up its naval base at Guantanamo Bay. In May 1964, Ben Bella signed a joint communiqué in Moscow which not only echoed Havana's demand for the evacuation of Guantanamo, but lambasted US overflights of Cuba as well. Also in 1964, Ben Bella became the honorary president of the Algerian-Cuban Friendship Committee center and took advantage of the inauguration ceremony both to heap praise of the Castro regime and to denounce the US' Cuban policy.

Algeria never fails to have a delegation on hand in Cuba to help observe a wide variety of ceremonial occasions. [redacted] an Algerian delegation has been invited to attend a "solidarity with Cuba" congress that may be held this June in Uruguay. 25X1

Both the Algerian and Cuban governments are currently conducting a massive campaign in preparation for the World Youth Festival, to be held in Algiers from 28 July to 7 August. Cuban propaganda media stress the

25X1 [redacted]
[redacted] Cuba sent a shipment of arms to Algeria in early January 1965. [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] Cuban military personnel are attached to the Algerian armed forces as instructors.

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appropriateness of "progressive" Algeria as the site of the congress. Newspapers in both Algeria and Cuba, are running poster contests to depict their solidarity of their youth in the "anti-imperialist" struggle. The Cuban contest winners will be part of an 880-member contingent that will be representing Cuba.

Cuban Contacts With
Other African Governments

In addition to Algeria, Cuba maintains embassies in the UAR, Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, Tanzania, and the Brazzaville Congo. In contrast, only Algeria, Ghana, Morocco, and the UAR maintain diplomatic missions in Havana.

Cuba tries to cultivate African governments in a number of ways. Perhaps the most common is through education. Since 1961, Cuba has provided academic training to students from African states with which it maintains diplomatic relations. They also receive standard political indoctrination and are expected to take part in economic activities such as cutting sugar cane.

Cuba apparently has a particular interest in developing

cultural relations with Ghana and Mali. Agreements signed with these two countries last year provide for collaboration in cultural affairs and an exchange of students. A Cuban official has claimed that Cuba also is giving "medical assistance" to Ghana and Mali.

Preliminary readings of Cuba's impact on these two radical African countries are mixed. In Mali, the Cubans seem to have done quite well. Indicative of this is the highly complimentary manner in which an influential local newspaper treated a recent Castro speech attacking the US and stressing Cuba's independence in the "socialist camp."

Ghana is a different story. There the feeling is one of antagonism toward the Cubans, who apparently are regarded as interlopers in an area that Kwame Nkrumah looks upon as his own sphere of influence.

[redacted] Ghana rejected a Cuban offer of two agricultural experts. Indeed, the Ghanaian chargé in Havana has informed the Cuban Government that Ghana will not tolerate the presence of Cuban propagandists operating in the guise of cultural workers.

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25X1 Cuban relations with Tanzania are cordial. The Tanzanian delegation to the 26 July celebration in Havana last year was accorded red-carpet treatment, and Tanzanian leaders, headed by President Nyerere, reciprocated by turning out in unprecedented numbers for a Cuban Embassy reception in January. Guevara, moreover, attended the first anniversary of the Zanzibar revolt this February, at which time he proposed an exchange of "intellectuals." He is also said to have offered military training in Cuba for members of the Zanzibari Army, a move that would be an extension of an earlier Cuban training program for Zanzibari subversives. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the imminent arrival in Zanzibar of 25 Cuban military instructors to train Zanzibaris or southern African "freedom fighters."

25X1 Diplomatic relations with the Brazzaville Congo are just getting under way; the Cuban Embassy there was opened less than a month ago. [REDACTED]

Cuba's relations with Morocco are primarily economic. Trade between the two countries amounted to over \$60 million in 1964. Political relations are only distantly polite; Rabat is still smoldering over the assistance Havana rendered to Algeria in the 1963 affair, and Havana is well aware of the Moroccan Government's basically Western-oriented but technically non-aligned policy.

Cuba has only limited contact with the other African governments--the UAR and Guinea--with which it maintains diplomatic relations. These governments send delegates to Cuban celebrations and occasionally host Cuban study or technical groups. However, Cuba has apparently decided that it has only a minimal prospect of influencing these governments and is therefore concentrating on states where its chances of success, however limited, are better.

Paramilitary Training

Since at least 1961, Cuba has provided paramilitary and guerrilla-warfare training to small groups of Africans. Contact is usually established through Cuban diplomatic posts in certain radical African states which allow some sort of representation for such rebel movements.

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Dissidents from the Portuguese overseas territories, from South Africa, and from Senegal are known to have received training in Cuba, and there is strong reason to believe that the same offer has been made to people from the Congo, Togo, Zanzibar, Kenya, and Rhodesia.

The most detailed information on the types of training received by Africans is contained in reports of the interrogation of a member of the African Independence Party (PAI), the illegal Communist party of Senegal. The Senegalese claimed that he was one of 30 of his countrymen who traveled to Cuba in 1964 for nine months of guerrilla warfare training. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the guerrilla tactics taught the Senegalese included maintenance of small arms, handling of grenades and techniques of assassination. Some of the group were introduced to map reading and communications procedures. [REDACTED]

In line with what has become standard Cuban practice in their work with Latin American personnel, the Africans may well have been integrated into Cuban counterinsurgency forces for a period of on-the-job training.

Havana intends to continue preparing Africans for subver-

sive work. During the conference of nonaligned countries in Cairo last year, Cuban President Dorticos reportedly sought out Holden Roberto, head of the Government of the Republic of Angola in Exile (GRAE), to proffer Havana's support for the GRAE, and indicated that some of its members could be welcomed to Cuban training facilities. In any case, a member of the rival Angolan group, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola claims that Guevara promised the MPLA a number of scholarships including some in military tactics.

Outlook

Cuban efforts to win friends and influence in Africa have so far produced uneven results and show little promise of achieving a dramatic breakthrough in the foreseeable future. Cuba has been successful in obtaining reciprocal propaganda support from the more radical African states and various "liberation" movements. Some Africans have accepted the view that Castro represents the wave of the future in the western hemisphere.

However, the brashness of Cuban propaganda, together with Havana's presumption of claiming itself as an example has rubbed some powerful African figures the wrong way, and is likely to continue doing so. Unless there is a change in pitch, leaders like Nasir and Nkrumah--far from feeling that there is anything they can learn from Cuba--can be

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expected increasingly to take the attitude that Castro is interfering in an area of which he has no knowledge and in which he has no business.

Also going against Cuba's aspirations is the wide disparity between what Havana says it can do for Africans and its own inability to provide for itself. Even if Cuba were able to put its own economic house in order, only the most radical Africans could have illusions that at 3,000 miles distance or more, an isolated, primarily agrarian island can do very much beyond providing moral support. In any case, the increasing transparency of Cuba's almost total economic dependence on the USSR cannot be lost on many Africans who must question Cuban admonitions against their getting too deeply committed to Moscow.

Yet the Castro regime probably calculates that it has, up

to now, obtained a net return on its African investments. The chief dividends are counted in terms of African support in the UN and other international forums. Cuba was the only Latin American government invited to attend the May meeting of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization. Cuba successfully proposed that a three-continent meeting under the auspices of AAPSO be held in Havana next January, to coincide with the seventh anniversary of the Cuban revolution. Another Cuban victory would be chalked up if the invited African delegates show up at this summer's anticipated "Solidarity with Cuba" conference in Uruguay. As long as such political returns continue Cuba can be expected to maintain its African operations for an indefinite period.

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